

DR. VIKAS MAHATME (Maharashtra): Sir, I associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: *"Tendulkarji, thank you for speaking in Konkani". This arrangement for interpretation has been done by a 21 year old student of Delhi University, who has been empanelled under the new scheme of Consultant Interpreters for different languages. I compliment the girl for doing an effective translation.

**Need for informed debate and discussion on the Law Commission's
Report on Uniform Civil Code**

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH (Karnataka): Sir, my Zero Hour submission is on the need for an informed debate and discussion on the Law Commission's Report on the Uniform Civil Code. In June, 2016, the Ministry of Law and Justice made a reference to the Law Commission to examine all matters relating to the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code which is a Directive Principle in our Constitution. On the 31st August, 2018, the Law Commission released a 185-page Consultation Paper, which is called 'Reform of Family Law'. It has four Chapters, namely, Marriage and Divorce, Custody and Guardianship, Adoption and Maintenance, and Succession and Inheritance, and inevitably, the Chapter on Marriage and Divorce occupies most of the space in this major Report. Sir, I would like to quote para 1.15 of this Consultation Paper. It says—this is the Law Commission saying—"While diversity of Indian culture can and should be celebrated, specific groups, or weaker sections of the society must not be disprivileged in the process. Resolution of this conflict does not mean abolition of difference. This Commission has, therefore, dealt with laws that are discriminatory rather than providing a uniform civil code which is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage."

This is the conclusion of the Law Commission. A Uniform Civil Code is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage. Most countries are now moving towards recognition of difference, etc. Sir, the Law Commission then went on to say, "The way forward may not be a Uniform Civil Code but the codification of all personal laws so that prejudices and stereo-types in every one of them would come to light and could be tested on the anvil of Fundamental Rights guaranteed by the Constitution." By codification of different personal laws, one can arrive at certain universal principles that prioritize equity rather than the imposition of a Uniform Civil Code. The Commission then suggested certain measures in marriage and divorce that should be uniformly

* English translation of the speech delivered in Konkani.

accepted in the personal laws of all religions. These amendments include: marriageable age for boys and girls at 18 years so that they may marry as equals, making adultery a ground of divorce for men and women and to simplify divorce procedure. Recommendations were also made to abolish polygamy by law. Sir, I would like the Minister and the Government to inform the House what action has been taken on the recommendations of the Law Commission, and I would request you to allow some time for a discussion on this very important subject. Thank you.

श्री पी.एल. पुनिया (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं माननीय सदस्य द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से स्वयं को सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री हुसैन दलवाई (महाराष्ट्र): महोदय, मैं भी माननीय सदस्य द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से स्वयं को सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

SHRI K.K. RAGESH (Kerala): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI ABIR RANJAN BISWAS (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI BINOY VISWAM (Kerala): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI R.S. BHARATHI (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI PRASHANTANANDA (Odisha): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

DR. L. HANUMANTHAIAH (Karnataka): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRIMATI WANSUK SYIEM (Meghalaya): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI T.K.S. ELANGO VAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI M. SHANMUGAM (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI P. WILSON (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI K. SOMAPRASAD (Kerala): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have been discussing this for years together. We need to discuss it further. Now, the Uniform Civil Code, a common civil code that is what is being suggested. One has to discuss it in the House. One of the days, we will think about it. Now, Shri Rajeev Chandrashekhar.

**Need for reforms in the disability pension system
for armed forces**

SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASHEKHAR (Karnataka): Sir, I am drawing the attention of the House and the Government on the issue of disability pension for our veterans, an issue I have raised repeatedly in this House since 2009. I believe, it is time to review the rules and regulations and create new rules to ensure honour, fair and equitable compensation to those in the Armed Forces who have served and have suffered wounds, injuries and disabilities during their service. Sir, the House is aware and the Government is aware that the disability pension and the income-tax exemption on that was started way back in 1921 and the rules have since been modified, after the 1971 war, post Sri Lanka conflict and the Kargil war. I think, it is time again now to review it because of the recent controversies that have crept in. I have raised this issue earlier in the House and the hon. Defence Minister had promised *status quo* at that time and the matter had settled down. Till recently in 20th February, 2020, a circular was issued by the Principal Controller of Defence Accounts that was circulated to various banks to deduct income-tax from the pensions of disabled soldiers based upon a clarification issued by the CBDT in June, 2019, despite the Supreme Court ordering a *status quo* on the issue. But, responding to this, the MoD swiftly acted with a suppression of that circular. Sir, while this Government has taken significant steps for the welfare of our soldiers and veterans including One Rank One Pension, the National War Memorial that were pending for decades, it is clear that we need reforms in the disability pension area. So, I may make a few suggestions. One is that there are several grey areas that have crept into these rules and there is risk and there is some suspicion that some of the rules are being misused and subject to subjective interpretation. So, that is one